**TITLE: The LITTLE RAT IN ALL OF US**

**TEXT: 1 Sam. 6:2-6; 1 Jn. 4:4; Ps. 91:1; Ro. 8:12-14; Col. 3:1-17; Ro. 8:1-4, 12-15**

**INTRODUCTION**: This morning, I want to talk about rats. Not the cute little pet store or laboratory variety but real rats. The kind that lives in sewers and garbage dumps and carry disease.

 In the 1800’s the bubonic plague ravaged Europe. Millions of people died as a result of this plague. Guess what the carrier of the disease was? Rats! The rats carried the disease and fleas would transmit the disease from the rats to the people and millions of people died because of this plague carried by rats.

 In the time of the kings of Israel there came a time when the Ark of the Covenant was captured by the Philistine army. They took the ark back home with them and God struck the Philistine people with a plague of disease carrying rats. These rats carried a disease that caused the people to break out with deadly tumors.

**1 Samuel 6:2 -6 (NIV) 1When the ark of the LORD had been in Philistine territory seven months,****2the Philistines called for the priests and the diviners and said, “What shall we do with the ark of the LORD? Tell us how we should send it back to its place.”**

**3They answered, “If you return the ark of the god of Israel, do not send it away empty, but by all means send a guilt offering to him. Then you will be healed, and you will know why his hand has not been lifted from you.”**

**4The Philistines asked, “What guilt offering should we send to him?”**

**They replied, “Five gold tumors and five gold rats, according to the number of the Philistine rulers, because the same plague has struck both you and your rulers.****5Make models of the tumors and of the rats that are destroying the country, and pay honor to Israel’s god. Perhaps he will lift his hand from you and your gods and your land.**

Here we have  a situation where the Philistines have captured the Ark of God and because of that God has sent a plague of disease carrying rats among them...Now they are trying to appease God and send the Ark back.....

I can remember as a kid growing up in St Charles one of the ways that we would entertain ourselves would be to go out to the city dump just outside of town and go rat hunting.

 Often you would have one guy walk up upon a huge pile of garbage to flush out the rats and then the rest of us would shoot the rats as they came out from under the piles of garbage….

 Some days we got a lot of rats! Some days the rats would be so thick that they almost got us! Especially if it happened to be your turn to be the one who was on the trash pile driving them out…

Rats can be very vicious little creatures. They can also be sneaky and deceptive.

Example: When we lived in the country a Rat got in our house. I am pretty sure he came in through the sewer line…. We would hear him at night raising all kinds of Cain in the kitchen so we put out a large glue trap. I woke up one night to a loud screeching sound and found that the rat had got caught in glue trap by his tail and ate its own tail off to get free.

Finally, I asked one of the pest control guys at work how to get rid of it. He gave me some poison. I was concerned about the rat dying somewhere and smelling up the house but he assured me that this Poison would dehydrate the rat so fast he wouldn’t have time to smell.…

 Eventually the noise at night ceased and a month or so later I went into the basement and there on the floor was a dried out rat---totally dehydrated---like a piece of furry cardboard.

We found that rats can be hard to get rid of…

Rats have become synonymous with dirty, disease-carrying rodents.

The heritage dictionary defines rat as:

 **Any of various long-tailed rodents resembling mice but larger…**

**A despicable, sneaky person, especially one who betrays or informs upon associates or others.**

And so rat has become a synonym of a person with a

lack of character, someone who is sneaky, someone who is untrustworthy, someone who betrays a friend in word or deed...

Judas Iscariot ratted out Jesus for 30 pieces of silver..

 All of us, I believe, have rat-like tendencies.

The fact is there is a little rat within all of us.

That rat within us is our sinful nature.

I love the old TV series the Incredible Hulk.

They made it into a movie a few years ago and the movie was ok but I like the old TV version a lot better..

 A scientist by the name of David Brenner is working in his lab one night and there is an accident with some chemicals, a large explosion and David Brenner becomes the Hulk….

 His body chemistry has been changed due to the accident and whenever he gets angry or gets upset a metamorphosis takes place within in his body and he changes from a small and mild-mannered man into this big ugly green guy with superhuman strength…

 Every time I see that show it reminds me of the rat within us…The sinful nature that lies within us just waiting to burst forth with the slightest provocation….

 We get angry or provoked and how easy that ugly green monster, that rat, comes out of us….

 Have you ever thought that you were doing pretty well in your relationship with the Lord. You feel that you finally have made some progress in living a Christ like life.

 You see evidence of the process of sanctification in your life and are feeling pretty good about it and then something happens to set you off and you get angry and say something that you shouldn’t say or do something that you shouldn’t do and think—man, where did that come from!

 Well, it came from the beast, the rat that lies within… It came from the sinful nature…

 So, this morning I want to talk about dealing with the rat that lies within

 When we come to Christ God doesn’t remove our sinful nature. It would be nice if He would have but He doesn’t.

 However, when we come to embrace Christ God does give us what we need to combat and even subdue our sinful nature, He gives us the Holy Spirit.

It is what caused John to say in:

**1 John 4:4 (NKJV) Greater is He who is in us then he who is in the world.**

 In Christ Jesus God has given us something greater, something more powerful, then even our own nature to sin.

He has given us His Holy Spirit to indwell our hearts.

 Years ago, in the pioneer days of aviation, a pilot was making a flight around the world. After he had been gone for some two hours from his last landing field, he heard a noise in his plane, which he recognized as the gnawing of a rodent. He realized that while his plane had been on the ground a rat had gotten in. For all he knew the rat could be gnawing through a vital cable or control of the plane. It was a very serious situation.

 He was both concerned and anxious. At first he did not know what to do. It was two hours back to the landing field from which he had taken off and more than two hours to the next field ahead. Then he remembered that the rat is a rodent. It is not made for the heights; it is made to live on the ground and under the ground.

 Therefore, the pilot began to climb. He went up a thousand feet, then another thousand and another until he was several thousand feet up.

 The gnawing ceased. The rat was dead. The rat could not survive in the atmosphere of those heights. More than two hours later the pilot brought the plane safely to the next landing field and found the dead rat.

 This is how we need to deal with the rat that lies within each of us…The rat of our sinful nature.

 We need to climb to the heights that God enables us to climb via the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit to kill the rat within us….

**Psalms 91:1 -(NIV)** **1He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High**  **will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.**

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**will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.**

 I believe that the Holy Spirit of God that He has placed within the heart of everyone who has confessed Jesus as Lord and Savior of their life is the shelter of the Most High that God has provided us.

The Hebrew word that we translate as dwell in English is:

***yaw-shab'***

**A primitive root; properly to *sit* down (specifically as in ambush, in quiet); by implication to *dwell*, to *remain*; to *settle*, to *marry:—* abide, to inhabit…**

The word used for shelter here is:

***say'-ther,* *sith-raw'***

**a *cover* (in a literal or a figurative sense):— covering, disguise , hiding place, protection, secret place).**

 The Holy Spirit is that secret place, that place of covering, that place of shelter that God has provided us that we are to settle or dwell in….

 **He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High**

**will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.**

The word rest the kjv translates as abide comes from the Hebrew:

***loon,* *leen***

**A primitive root; to *stop*; by implication to *stay* permanently**…

The word shadow comes from the word:

 ***tsale***

***shade*—defence**

We put all this together and what this scripture is telling us is that:

 If we sit down, if we abide in the covering, the shelter, the place of protection that God has provided for us then we actually will be taking up permanent residence in the defense of the Almighty God.

 The covering, the shelter, that place of protection that God has provided us is His Holy Spirit!

 The products of our sinful nature—anger, fits of rage, gossip, slander, lying, cheating, worrying, unkind and hurtful speech, selfish ambitions, lustful and prideful thoughts and all the other un-Christ like tendencies that we have are all rodents of our flesh and these rodents cannot live, they cannot survive in the secret place of the Most High. They cannot breathe in the atmosphere of the Holy Spirit…

 So that is the place that we must decide to dwell, must decide to reside, if we are to ever expect the rodent of our sinful nature to truly be put to death…

The Apostle Paul talks about this very thing in:

 **Romans 8:12 - 14 (NIV) 12Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it.****13For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live,****14because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God.**

 **If you live by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body and you will live!**

Sin is not made to survive in the heights of God presence!

 When we live by the Spirit we are living in the presence of God.

 **Colossians 3:1 - 10 (NIV) 1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. 4When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory.**

**5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed, which is idolatry.**

**6Because of these, the wrath of God is coming.****7You used to walk in these ways, in the life you once lived.**

**8But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips.****9Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices****10and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.**

**1Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. 2Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. 3For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God….**

Scripture tells us that we are to do----….

**5Put to death, therefore, whatever belongs to your earthly nature: sexual immorality, impurity, lust, evil desires and greed…**

We are to rid ourselves of**: anger, rage, malice, slander, filthy language and lying…**

Just how is it that we set our hearts and our minds on the things above?

 How is it that put to death the desires of our sinful nature, put to death the miss-deeds of our fleshly nature?

 By giving control of our hearts and our minds to the Holy Spirit of God that He has placed within us..

 By making the conscious and determined decision to obey the Holy Spirits leading in our lives…

That is how we take off the old self and its practices and put on the new self which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.

 It is through simple obedience to the Holy Spirit that God has placed within our hearts that we take the rodent, the rat of our sinful nature, to heights that it cannot survive!

 Our sinful nature was made for dwelling in the mud, and it simply cannot survive in the atmosphere of the Most High God! It cannot live in the heights we take it when we live our lives obedient to the Holy Spirit!

The Apostle Paul explains it this way…

**Romans 8:1 – 4, 12- 15 (NIV)**

**1Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, 2because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. 3For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in sinful man, 4in order that the righteous requirements of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the sinful nature but according to the Spirit.**

**…..12Therefore, brothers, we have an obligation—but it is not to the sinful nature, to live according to it. 13For if you live according to the sinful nature, you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the misdeeds of the body, you will live, 14because those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, *“Abba,*Father.”**

In speaking about the Holy Spirits potential in our lives Dwight Moody once said this to his audience: *"Tell me," "How can I get the air out of this glass?" One man said, "Suck it out with a pump." Moody replied, "That would create a vacuum and shatter the glass." After many other impossible suggestions, Moody smiled, picked up a pitcher of water, and filled the glass. "There," he said, "all the air is now removed." He then went on to show that victory in the Christian life is not by "sucking out a sin here and there," but rather by being filled with the Spirit.*

In a sense we control our filling with the Holy Spirit of God.

 A city dweller moved to a farm and bought a cow. Shortly after he did, the cow went dry. When he reported this fact to a neighbor farmer, the farmer expressed surprise. The city man said he was surprised too. "I can't understand it either, for if ever a person was considerate of an animal, I was of that cow. If I didn't need any milk, I didn't milk her. If I only needed a quart, I only took a quart." The farmer tried to explain that the only way to keep milk flowing is not to take as little as possible from the cow, but to take as much as possible.

Is that not also true of the Christian life? Those who only turn to God in a specific time of need miss the real joy that flows from a daily infilling of His Spirit.

Don’t settle for just a little of the Spirit in your life but make Him a river that flows through your life…

 Like milk from a cow, the more that you use the more you will get!

The more that we draw upon the Spirit the more of the Spirit we will have!

Do you find that, at times, you still have a little rat living in you**?**

That there are times when you find that you don’t do the good that you know that you should but end up doing or saying the bad that you know you shouldn’t?

If so then take that rat that lies within to a height that it can’t survive! Subject it to the heights of obedience to the Holy Spirit of God and that rat will stop gnawing away at your life and relationship with God and you will find yourself free to sore safely at the heights that God has for you to sore….